

Q&A

KATE MARA

ACTRESS KATE MARA grew up on a farm in Bedford, New York, where she remembers deer running through the yard and horses within walking distance of the family home. She had pets then, and she has pets now—two Boston terriers named Lucius and Bruno.

"Animals have always been a massive part of my life," says Mara, whose mother's rescued Boston terrier, Betty, makes weekly visits to a retirement home. "The dog brings so much joy to so many peoples' lives."

On a road trip together nearly a decade ago, the family once again found themselves surrounded by animals—but in a much, much different way. Mara remembers passing "miles upon miles of chicken coops" and realizing then "what a horrific life these animals were leading.

"I was unaware of factory farming until that moment."

She decided to become vegetarian. And five years later, inspired further by meeting nutritionist Kimberly Snyder and reading her book *The Beauty Detox Solution*, Mara cut animal products from her diet completely. She recently narrated an HSUS video about factory farming and the benefits of reducing meat consumption. "Every time we sit down to eat, we have a choice," she says in that video. "By choosing more meat-free meals, we're saying 'yes' to better health, 'yes' to a better environment, and 'yes' to better treatment of animals."

Senior content editor Michael Sharp recently interviewed Mara, a dedicated HSUS supporter who last year presented the Impact Award to *Blackfish* director Gabriela Cowperthwaite at the organization's 60th Anniversary Benefit Gala in Los Angeles.

What made factory farming an issue you wanted to speak out about?

I recognize that a large majority of meat and dairy consumers are unaware of the horrific process these animals endure in order for them to eat these products. I was a meat eater for a long time, and I would have made different choices in my diet if I had known the facts about factory farming. I now feel it's my moral obligation, and I'm very passionate about educating people on making better, more humane choices when it comes to the food we eat.

You played a journalist in the Netflix series *House of Cards*. Is there an animal-related topic you wish was getting more attention these days?

There are endless animal-related topics that need more attention, but one that comes to mind—because I was just in New York City—is the bill to ban horse-drawn carriages [there]. I'm hoping it passes and the controversy is no longer in question.

You once tweeted of the documentary *Blackfish*: "See the movie ASAP." Why is it an important film for people to watch?

I was deeply moved by this film. So much so that I reached out to its director, Gabriela, and asked her how I could help, and I'll continue to lend a voice to the movement for as long as needed. It is issues like this one that we need to continuously talk about and teach people about because the majority of the population—myself included—has no idea these beautiful mammals are living in such horrific conditions. I had visited SeaWorld as a child, and if I had been informed then as I am now, I would have been protesting the organization rather than supporting it.



THOSE INTERESTED in the rise and fall of greyhound racing as a sport will want to check out the first book to provide a cultural history. Gwyneth Anne Thayer's *Going to the Dogs: Greyhound Racing, Animal Activism, and American Popular Culture* traces the emergence and growth of greyhound racing as a leisure pursuit and follows its evolution throughout the 20th century as it moved toward a collision with more compassionate contemporary views on animals and changing tastes in recreation. Thayer shows how class, culture, politics and social reform all played out in a century-long struggle over the welfare of animals in the racing industry. From its origins in the rabbit drives of the Midwest to its persistence in the age of pari-mutuel betting, she's got it covered.



FORMER SENIOR orca trainer John Hargrove takes readers on a fascinating and terrifying dive even deeper into the dark side of SeaWorld in his book *Beneath the Surface: Killer Whales, SeaWorld, and the Truth Beyond Blackfish*. Hargrove starred in *Blackfish*, a 2013 documentary that criticized the park for its handling of trainer Dawn Brancheau's death in 2010 and the psychological damage captivity causes



killer whales. In this book, he reveals more atrocities—such as the practice of withholding food to ensure whales performed to "expectations" and the barbaric artificial insemination process. The book balances Hargrove's appreciation for the majestic creatures with his realization that his lifelong dream to work with them had unraveled into a nightmare. A stunning read for anyone enthralled by *Blackfish*.